



4. MALNUTRITION IN ELDERLY POPULATION - HOSPITAL VERSUS COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: There are many factors that leads to malnutrition in the elderly. Prevention of malnutrition is important, and screening and assessment is necessary.

Objectives: The aim was relating malnutrition in elderly population at hospital admission and in community.

Materials and methods: Multicentric quasi-experimental, correlational, longitudinal, developed in the district of Lisbon. Elderly people (≥ 65 years) admitted to the Internal Medicine Unit of a central hospital (up to 72 hours) and in community were eligible. The elderly participants had to present capacity to make their informed consent, without intervention of any element of coercion, with enough knowledge and understanding of the objectives of the study that allowed free and informed decision making. The nutritional assessment was performed through the MNA-LF[®] and the analysis of the body composition through the measurement of the calf circumference and triceps skinfold.

Results: n= 56 patients, with a mean age of 79.8 ± 6.3 years (70-94), 60.3% (n=35) males, 5.2% (n=3) were malnourished, 38,2% (n=19) presented nutritional risk, 24.1% (n=14) presented depletion of lean mass and 30,4% (n=17) depletion of fat mass.

When we reported presence of malnutrition with the calf circumference and tricipital skin fold, there was a statistically significant correlation ($p=0,000$; $r=0,009$). Malnourished patients presented depletion of lean mass and fat mass.

At hospital admission 7.9% were malnourished, 39.5% presented nutritional risk, 34.2% presented depletion of lean mass and 31.6% depletion of fat mass. In community 22.2% presented nutritional risk, 5.6% presented depletion of lean mass and 27.8% depletion of fat mass. No statistically significant differences were found between nutritional status and depletion of lean and fat mass.

Discussion/Conclusion: screening and nutritional assessment is important in the elderly population. It was verified that nutritional status and depletion of lean mass and fat mass is a reality in situations of acute illness.

Keywords: Elderly, Malnutrition, Body Composition, Hospital, Community.